

AUTUMN AND ITS FEASTS

ARTICLE

Summer has been over for quite some time now. The leaves have changed, the temperature has dropped, and now we warily prepare for a season of coughs, chills and bony, barren trees. Even though winter draws nearer with each passing moment, we still look forward to celebrations associated with Autumn, particularly Halloween and Thanksgiving. Other countries have equally fun, bizarre and exciting celebrations that kick off in the Fall—be it dressing in costume or even setting things on fire, we bring you a handful of the most interesting of them all. Let's go through it one by one, our, neighbors', world's most fascinating.

THANKSGIVING DAY

Thanksgiving Day is an annual national holiday celebrating the harvest and other blessings of the past year. Americans generally believe that their Thanksgiving is modeled on a 1621 harvest feast shared by the English colonists (Pilgrims) of Plymouth and the Wampanoag people. As the country became more urban and family members began to live farther apart, Thanksgiving became a time to gather together. The holiday moved away from its religious roots to allow immigrants of every background to participate in a common tradition. The American holiday is particularly rich in legend and symbolism, and the traditional fare of the Thanksgiving meal typically includes turkey and pumpkin pie.

HALLOWEEN

HALLOWE'EN, or All Hallows Eve, the name given to the 31st of October as the vigil of Hallowmas or All Saints' Day. Though now known as little else but the eve of the Christian festival, Hallowe'en and its formerly attendant ceremonies long antedate Christianity. The two chief characteristics of ancient Hallowe'en were the lighting of bonfires and the belief that of all nights in the year this is

the one during which ghosts and witches are most likely to wander abroad. Now on or about the 1st of November the Druids held their great autumn festival and lighted fires in honour of the Sun-god in thanksgiving for the harvest.

Halloween activities include trick-or-treating (or the related guising), attending Halloween costume parties, carving pumpkins into jack-o'-lanterns, lighting bonfires, apple bobbing, divination games, playing pranks, visiting haunted attractions, telling scary stories, and watching horror films. In many parts of the world, the Christian religious observances of All Hallows' Eve, including attending church services and lighting candles on the graves of the dead, remain popular, although elsewhere it is a more commercial and secular celebration. Some Christians historically abstained from meat on All Hallows' Eve, a tradition reflected in the eating of certain vegetarian foods on this vigil day, including apples, potato pancakes, and [soul cakes](#).

ALL SAINTS DAY

All Saints Day, also known as All Hallows' Day, or Hallowmas, is a Christian celebration in honor of all the saints from Christian history. The Christian festival of All Saints Day comes from a conviction that there is a spiritual connection between those in Heaven and on Earth. In Catholic tradition, the holiday honors all those who have passed on to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is a national holiday in numerous historically Catholic countries. In Methodist tradition, All Saints Day relates to giving God earnest gratitude for the lives and deaths of his saints, remembering those who were well-known and not.

ALL SOULS' DAY

All Souls' Day, in Roman Catholicism, a day for commemoration of all the faithful departed, those baptized Christians who are believed to be in purgatory because they died with the guilt of lesser sins on their souls. It is observed on November 2. Roman Catholic doctrine holds that the prayers of the faithful on earth will help cleanse these souls in order to fit them for the vision of God in heaven, and the day is dedicated to prayer and remembrance. Requiem masses

are commonly held, and many people visit and sometimes decorate the graves of loved ones.

SAINT MARTIN'S DAY

Saint Martin's day, also known as the Feast of Saint Martin, Martinstag or Martinmas, as well as Old Halloween and Old Halloween Eve, is the feast day of Saint Martin of Tours. Taking place on the 11th of November, Martinmas celebrates the death of Saint Martin, a Roman soldier who was baptized as an adult, and who later became a monk. The legend states that Martin saw a beggar exposed to the freezing cold, and so cut his cloak in two to share with the man, saving his life. Martin is known as a symbol of charity and generosity and is a patron to the poor. The date of Saint Martin's death on the 11th coincides with the end of harvest, and so many traditional celebrations are synonymous with enjoying a feast or indulging in certain delicacies. In Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands, schoolchildren design paper lanterns and visit houses in the neighborhood singing songs in exchange for sweets.

5 FASCINATING AUTUMN CELEBRATIONS AROUND THE WORLD

[Great Britain's Bonfire night](#) - Fireworks illuminate the sky on Guy Fawkes Night. Two of the largest celebrations take place in Lewes and Glasgow. People dress up in various costume and parade through the street with lanterns and torches.



Day of the Dead or [Dia de los Muertos](#) is a Mexican holiday. Traditions associated with the holiday include building altars to remember the dead, making food offerings to the dead and caring for graves. The celebration is important because it honors the dead while still celebrating life.



India - Known as "The Festival of Lights," [Diwali](#) is an ancient Hindu festival celebrated in Autumn as determined by the Hindu Lunisolar calendar. The festival signifies the victory of light over darkness, good over evil.

Also called Mid-Autumn Festival, the [Moon Festival](#) is a harvest celebration observed by ethnic Chinese and Vietnamese people. It takes place on the night of the full moon between September and October.

The [Yi Peng festival](#) is held throughout Thailand and some parts of Laos, and coincides with Loi Krathong.

Traditionally, the people make decorated baskets, which are floated down a river for Loi Krathong.

Traditionally, only monks released the sky lanterns, but now anyone is free to do so. Other events include parades, beauty contests and celebratory meals.



QUESTIONS

1. Do you know any form of Thanksgiving? What do you thank for and how is it celebrated?
2. Do you have other than written festivities in autumn? What is being celebrated?
3. Do you celebrate Halloween? The American version or the 'Night of the 1000 Lights' with the church? Which one do you like more?
4. How are All Saints celebrated at yours? Together or separately from All Souls?
5. Saint Martin is also associated with other customs, what are you celebrating around St. Martin?
6. What is the best holiday of the year for you?
7. When is your birthday? How do you celebrate your birthday? How did you celebrate your birthday as a girl, single, without children?
8. Do you celebrate your name day? How do you like your own name and what does it mean? Do you have a nick name?
9. What do you like best about autumn?